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Title: Government I

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## DESPOTISM

In a Despotism government, the Leader is a military dictator whose authority ultimately rests on force of arms and the secret police. Despotism Leaders enjoy a great deal of clout, as the Despotism system of government concentrates power in their hands. For the same reason, Despotism governments are always highly centralized. Since the Leader and other powerful members of the government are subject to few checks on their authority, opportunities for corruption abound. Ruthless use of the internal security apparatus can help keep corruption in check, but care must be taken to ensure that this does not merely displace most of the corruption to the internal security forces themselves. Should the regime's backing dissolve, despotism Leaders risk losing their grip on power and, often, their lives as well. It is not difficult for the military and internal security to replace the Leader in a coup provided that they remain united. However, succession often triggers vicious internecine power struggles, which, if they go on for a protracted period, can bring down the whole system. Similar difficulties attend

Despotic governments when the Leader retires or dies in office. Many despots try to pass on the office of Leader to their children, thereby founding a dynasty. In this way, Despotic regimes can, over time, become Monarchies.

## MONARCHY

A Monarchy can be anything from a feudal system in which the monarch outranks other nobles only slightly to a regime in which the monarch is considered to be a living god, whose every whim carries the force of law. But there is one constant: a Monarch who claims to rule by right of succession. Being a blood descendent of the reigning monarch is preferred, but it is not the only method. Should an entire dynasty come to a end, pretenders to the throne may claim to be descended from members of a previous royal family. Only monarchs unable to claim the throne by blood, or true tyrants, are likely to rely heavily on the military to prop up their governments. Most others rest upon their hereditary claim on the throne, buttressed by tradition. A certain amount of corruption is practically inevitable, especially when personal funds intermingle with those of the treasury. Transfers of power show Monarchy at both its strongest and its weakest. When one member of the ruling dynasty succeeds another, the transition will be smooth and the new

regime"s legitimacy  
virtually unquestioned.  
("The king is dead! Long  
live the king!") This  
legitimacy can come at a  
heavy price, however, as  
when the heir is not  
competent to govern.  
While this spells trouble  
for the government,  
installing someone other  
than the legitimate heir  
to the throne often leads  
to even worse trouble. If  
someone usurps the  
throne from the rightful  
heir, or if the empire  
has the misfortune to  
have its monarch die  
without an heir or clearly  
designated successor,  
widespread unrest and  
even civil war are more  
than likely to follow.

## OLIGARCHY

The word "oligarchy"  
means "rule by the few."  
In general, an Oligarchy is  
a transitional form of  
regime in which only a  
very small minority of  
the population is  
enfranchised. Depending on  
the faction(s)  
enfranchised, an oligarchic  
regime could be known by  
any number of names. For  
example, an Oligarchy  
dominated by the military  
and internal security is  
generally referred to as  
a "Junta," while an  
Oligarchic regime run by  
the social elite will often  
call itself an  
"Aristocracy." Many less  
familiar forms are also  
possible, e.g.  
"Technocracy," in which  
members of the scientific  
elite govern. All formal  
power in Oligarchies  
resides in a council  
chosen by the  
enfranchised few.  
Oligarchs fear allowing  
any one of their number

to accumulate too much power, so leadership of the council changes often. Inter-council politics are tumultuous and rife with intrigue. and the Leader of an Oligarchy therefore has less clout and less time to concentrate on administrative matters than do leaders of more stable regimes. Government officials are not subject to consistent oversight, and the current Leader has a strong incentive to overlook the misdeeds of other council members in order to maintain goodwill, so Oligarchic governments are often quite corrupt.

## CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY

This is a transitional form of government that lies between Monarchy and Representative types of governments. The Leader is a monarch who must share power with an elected parliament. Unlike in most other governments, the Leader of a Constitutional Monarchy is frequently a figurehead (i.e., is disenfranchised), while the real power lies with the Prime Minister of parliament. A party in parliament with the monarch's support and a strong majority can run roughshod over the opposition, but if the monarch is at odds with parliamentary leaders or if the party in power lacks a firm mandate, gridlock can result. Monarchs do not have to worry about being re-elected, so they generally have more time to devote to affairs of state than leaders of

some other government types. Thanks to the split in accountability between the monarch and the parliament, and historical prerogatives that any monarch will retain, Constitutional Monarchies afford greater scope for corruption than do Representative governments. Nevertheless, corruption is generally much lower than in Monarchies. Constitutional Monarchies are fairly stable. While frequent changes of prime minister are to be expected, the monarch provides the government with continuity.